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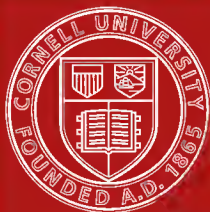
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THE POWER OF THE EYE IN COLERIDGE

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THE POWER OF THE EYE IN COLERIDGE

BY LANE COOPER

Every one will recall what a distinctive mark of the chief personage in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is his 'glittering eye'; and it will not be forgotten that in a stanza contributed by Wordsworth to the opening of the ballad by his friend, the Mariner is represented as exercising through the gleam of his eye a notable power of hypnotic fascination:

He holds him with his *glittering eye*—
The Wedding-Guest *stood still*,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.¹

¹ A. M. 13-16. Throughout this paper italics are used in order to draw attention to certain catchwords or stock phrases in the poet's vocabulary, e.g., *bright*, *bright-eyed*, *glitter*, *glittering*, *fixed*, *stood still*, etc. And the following abbreviations are employed: A. M. (= *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, in the final text of 1829 as reprinted by Campbell); A. M., 1 ed. (= the original text of the same poem in *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798, as reprinted by Campbell); P. W. (= the *Poetical Works* of Coleridge, edited by Campbell); and P. B. (= Wordsworth's *Peter Bell*).

That is, the Mariner has his own way with the Wedding-Guest, as the Sun, later on in the poem, has his way with the ship:

The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship *stood still* also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had *fixed* her to the ocean.²

At first reading, one might suppose the meaning to be that the Mariner had control of the Wedding-Guest's will—which of course is true. But it is not precisely what is said, as may be gathered from a stanza, subsequently omitted, in the original version of the ballad:

Listen, O listen, thou Wedding-guest!
'Marinere! thou hast thy will:
For that which comes out of thine *eye* doth make
My body and soul to be *still*.'³

The Wordsworthian lines commencing, 'He holds him with his glittering eye,' and the general Coleridgean notion in them, are sufficiently familiar, as is also the gloss which accompanies them: 'The Wedding-Guest is *spell-bound* by the *eye* of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.'⁴

However, it is not probable that among students of Coleridge the frequency with which

² A. M. 381-4.

³ A. M., 1 ed., 362-5.

⁴ Marginal gloss to A. M. 13-16.

the idea of an ocular hypnosis or the like arises in the mind of the poet has been duly observed, so that his full meaning in several otherwise well-known passages may easily escape the general reader. Accordingly, I propose to collect a number of extracts from Coleridge in which this notion is altogether patent; to add to these certain other extracts in which it may be only suggested, or is concealed, proceeding in such a way that the less may receive light from the more obvious; and to supply still further material, some of it drawn from remoter sources, that can be made to bear upon the particular subject of this study. Our study, therefore, will involve an examination of passages from *Lewti*, *The Three Graves*, *Kubla Khan*, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* in the first as well as the final and accepted version, *Christabel*, *The Nightingale*, *Osorio*, etc.; it will include some description of Coleridge's appearance—for example, the look of his eye—and some account of his interest in animal magnetism and ocular fascination; it will touch upon the widespread interest during the earlier part of Coleridge's life in Friedrich Anton Mesmer and his cult of magnetizers; and, among other things, it will allude to certain differences, casual as well as intended, between Coleridge and Wordsworth in their treatment of what is called the 'supernatural'. It hardly needs to be said that the present writer, being neither an adept in the secrets of animal

magnetism, nor versed in the immense literature on this and related topics, does not concern himself with any question as to the reality of the hypnotic influences issuing, or thought to issue, from the human eye, but only with Coleridge's opinion as to their reality or likelihood. For the history of the subject the reader may consult the standard work by Binet and Féré,⁵ Charles Mackay's *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions*,⁶ or, if they are accessible, some of the older treatises of which Coleridge himself makes mention—among them, and especially, that by Kluge.⁷ I have not been able to obtain this.

As for Coleridge himself, it may be assumed that he was conscious of a power that seemed to dwell in his own eye. Thus in the *Hexameters* addressed to William and Dorothy Wordsworth, and written, as their author says, 'during a temporary blindness in the year 1799', he exclaims:

O! what a life is the eye! what a fine and inscrutable essence!⁸

⁵ *Animal Magnetism*, New York, Appleton, 1890. See also the historical sketch at the beginning of Albert Moll's *Hypnotism*, New York, 1890.

⁶ London, Routledge, 1869 (volume 1, pp. 262-295, *The Magnetizers*).

⁷ Carl Alexander Kluge, *Versuch einer Darstellung des Animalischen Magnetismus*, Berlin, 1815 (first edition, 1811). The work was widely translated.

⁸ *P. W.*, p. 138.

And even in ordinary conversation he must have experienced, to an unusual degree, the sense of control over his audience which in the born orator we often attribute to his direct, or, as we call it, 'piercing' glance. In fact, Carlyle bears testimony to something of the sort in Coleridge, when the latter was an elderly and broken man, long after the halcyon days when *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel* were taking shape. Says Carlyle: 'I have heard Coleridge talk, with eager musical energy, two stricken hours, his face radiant and moist, and communicate no meaning whatsoever to any individual of his hearers—certain of whom, I for one, still kept eagerly listening in hope.'⁹ The Sage of Highgate evidently needed to lay no hand upon that chosen guest whom he would detain from the pleasures of the world at his feast of reason and flow of soul. In his prime he was not less magnetic. 'From Carlyon we learn that Coleridge dressed badly, "but I have heard him say, fixing his prominent eyes upon himself (as he was wont to do whenever there was a mirror in the room), with a singularly coxcombical expression of countenance, that his dress was sure to be lost sight of the moment he began to talk, an assertion which, whatever may be thought of its modesty, was not without truth."' ¹⁰

⁹ Carlyle, *Life of John Sterling: Works* (1904) 11.56.

¹⁰ Campbell, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, p. 99.

That there was something unusual, if not captivating, in his look may be inferred, if only from the strange and conflicting reports (brought together by Dr. Haney) as to the actual color of his eyes. They were, of course, large and gray, as his most intimate friends specifically affirm. Wordsworth calls him

A noticeable man, with large gray eyes.¹¹

And Dorothy Wordsworth, writing to a friend a year or so before the composition of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, says of Coleridge: 'His eye is large and full, not dark but gray; such an eye as would receive from a heavy soul the dullest expression, but it speaks every emotion of his animated mind. It has more of "the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling" than I ever witnessed. He has fine dark eyebrows, and an overhanging forehead.'¹² Several other references to Coleridge's eyes may be given summarily. Carlyle: 'The deep eyes, of a light hazel, were as full of sorrow as of inspiration.' Carlyle (on another occasion): 'A pair of strange, brown, timid, yet earnest looking eyes.' Emerson: 'Bright blue eyes, and fine clear complexion.' Armstrong: 'The quick, yet steady

¹¹ *Stanzas Written in my Pocket-copy of Thomson's 'Castle of Indolence'* 39.

¹² *Letters of the Wordsworth Family*, ed. Knight, 1.109. For other references to Coleridge's appearance I am indebted to the interesting article by Dr. John Louis Haney, *The Color of Coleridge's Eyes*, *Anglia* 23.424 ff.

and penetrating greenish-gray eye.' Winter (an imaginary portrait): 'The great, luminous, changeful blue eyes.' Leapidge Smith: 'Eyes not merely dark, but black, and keenly penetrating.' De Quincey (who, like the following, was a more trustworthy observer than some of the foregoing): 'His eyes were large, and in color were gray.' Hazlitt: 'Large, projecting eyebrows, and his eyes rolling beneath them like a sea with darkened lustre.' Henry Nelson Coleridge: 'His large gray eyes, at once the clearest and the deepest that I ever saw.' Harriet Martineau: 'His eyes were as wonderful as they were represented to be—light gray, extremely prominent, and actually "glittering." '

Much of the discrepancy in these reports may be set down to haste and carelessness in observation—Emerson, for example, is not always trustworthy on minor details; but, as we may gather from Dorothy Wordsworth, Coleridge's eyes, even before he began to take opium, might, under varying stress of emotion, go through a considerable range of appearance. As often happens with emotional subjects, his pupils were likely to suffer a striking dilatation, followed by intense contraction, the latter state having the effect which we know as a 'glitter'. At all events it doubtless is right to believe that in a measure the 'glittering eye' of the Ancient Mariner is the counterpart of an effect sometimes visible in the poet; and, if

there be such a thing as the hypnotic glance, there is nothing unreasonable in imagining that Coleridge possessed it.

In any case, if the existence of such a thing were affirmed, Coleridge was bound to be interested, as in any of those mysterious phenomena which he termed 'facts of mind'. Thus in a compendious description of himself which he sent to Thelwall in 1796, he remarks: 'Metaphysics and poetry and "facts of mind", that is, accounts of all the strange phantasms that ever possessed "your philosophy" . . . are my darling studies.'¹³ Though any systematic account of the studies in animal magnetism entered into by so discursive and unmethodical a reader as Coleridge is scarcely possible, there is some ground for supposing that in his earlier years he was more prone to believe in a 'fact of mind', such as ocular hypnosis, than he was in later life. His allusions to cures by suggestion among the American Indians, as recorded in Hearne's *Hudson's Bay*, and to similar occurrences among the negroes of whom he read in Bryan Edwards' *West Indies*,¹⁴ and indeed the use to which he puts his information on these matters in *Osorio* and the poems designed for *Lyrical Ballads*, all point to a less critical attitude

¹³ Letter of Nov. 19, 1796. *Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E. H. Coleridge, 1.181.

¹⁴ *P. W.*, p. 590. Cf. Hearne, pp. 193 ff., 218 ff; Edwards, Book 4, Chap. 3.

in the young Coleridge than we find in the Coleridge of *Table Talk* and Highgate. At Highgate he has become the cautious philosopher. It is therefore characteristic of him to say, under *Table Talk* for April 30, 1830: 'My mind is in a state of philosophical doubt as to animal magnetism. Von Spix, the eminent naturalist, makes no doubt of the matter, and talks coolly of giving doses of it.' Yet he goes on: 'The torpedo affects a third or external object, by an exertion of its own will; such a power is not properly electrical; for electricity acts invariably under the same circumstances.' And he adds: 'A steady gaze will make many persons of fair complexions blush deeply. Account for that.'¹⁵

However, he had already given as it were his final utterance on this head some years before 1830. Between 1820, when Southey's *Life of Wesley* appeared, and August, 1825, when Coleridge wrote the words in which he bequeathed his personally annotated copy of this work to its author, he had composed a long marginal memorandum on the similarity of the religious trances among the Wesleyan Methodists to the trances induced by the magnetizers. On the credibility of the phenomena said to occur during the magnetic trances, he observes:

'Among the magnetizers and attesters are to be found names of men . . . of integrity and incapability of intentional false-

¹⁵ Coleridge, *Works*, ed. Shedd, 6.302.

hood . . . Cuvier, Hufeland, Blumenbach, Eschenmeyer, Reil, etc. . . . Nine years has the subject of zoömagnetism been before me. I have traced it historically, collected a mass of documents in French, German, Italian, and the Latinists of the sixteenth century, have never neglected an opportunity of questioning eye-witnesses, *e.g.*, Tieck, Treviranus, De Prati, Meyer, and others of literary or medical celebrity, and I remain where I was, and where the first perusal of Klug's work had left me, without having moved an inch backward or forward. The reply of Treviranus, the famous botanist, to me, when he was in London, is worth recording: . . . "I have seen what I am certain I would not have believed on *your* telling and, in all reason, I can neither expect nor wish that you should believe on mine." ¹⁶

If the perusal of C. A. Kluge's (= 'Klug's') work left him in an enduring state of 'philosophical doubt', to track Coleridge through the labyrinth of his subsequent futile investigations would not seem to be urgently demanded; and we may merely observe that he owned a copy of this treatise in the edition of 1815.¹⁷ If he read this edition in the year of its issue, the 'nine years' of persistent study would bring the date of his marginal note in Southey's volume down to 1824. But even if he had seen

¹⁶ Coleridge, *Works*, ed. Shedd, 6.303.

¹⁷ See Haney's *Bibliography of Coleridge*, under 'Marginalia' (p. 119, No. 180).

Kluge in the edition of 1811, how are we to explain the long gap in his interest between 1797-98, when he had read Hearne and Edwards, and was writing *The Three Graves* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and 1811, or later, when he began his alleged comprehensive researches?¹⁸ It may, indeed, be the case that the date of his marginal note is the same as that of the bequest to Southey, 1825, and that his preoccupation with animal magnetism began just nine years earlier than this, namely, 1816, when he put himself under the medical care, and was received under the roof, of James Gillman at Highgate. In the library of a well-to-do physician, who was also a man of no slight intellectual curiosity, the poet would at that time be almost certain to find a number of books dealing with the subject.¹⁹ However this may be, it is clear,

¹⁸ See, however, Mackay, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions* 1.291: 'During the first twelve years of the [nineteenth] century little was heard of animal magnetism in any country of Europe. Even the Germans forgot their airy fancies, recalled to the knowledge of this every-day world by the roar of Napoleon's cannon and the fall or the establishment of kingdoms. During this period a cloud of obscurity hung over the science, which was not dispersed until M. Deleuze published, in 1813, his *Histoire Critique du Magnétisme Animal*. This work gave a new impulse to the half-forgotten fancy. Newspapers, pamphlets, and books again waged war upon each other on the question of its truth or falsehood; and many eminent men in the profession of medicine recommenced inquiry with an earnest design to discover the truth.'

¹⁹ Compare Coleridge, *Miscellanies*, etc., ed. Ashe, 1885, pp. 351, 365 (footnote), 408, 410, etc.

as Dykes Campbell points out, that by June, 1817, Coleridge had become deeply enough engrossed to think of writing a popular work of his own on animal magnetism, 'a proposal which he renewed (to Curtis) eighteen months later, when his old teacher, Blumenbach, had recanted his [dis]belief' in it. And since he thereupon 'offered to contribute an historical treatise to the *Encyclopedia Metropolitana*,' the idea may possibly not have been so easily relinquished as were some of his numerous other literary projects. Campbell also refers to a contemporary letter (August, 1817) in which Southey, writing to his wife, anticipates the nature of a visit which he is about to pay Coleridge: 'He will begin as he did when last I saw him, about Animal Magnetism, or some equally congruous subject, and go on from Dan to Beersheba in his endless loquacity.'²⁰ Coleridge's letter of December 1, 1818, to Curtis, though rather long, may be quoted in full:

'Dear Sir: Sometime ago, I ventured to recommend an article on Animal Magnetism, *purely historical*, for the *Encyclopedia Metropolitana*. Since then the celebrated Professor Blumenbach, for so many years the zealous antagonist of Animal Magnetism, has openly recanted his opinion in three separate paragraphs of his great work on Physiology, which is

²⁰ P. W., Introduction, p. cii.

a text book in all the hospitals and Medical Universities in Europe; and this too happens to be in the edition from which Dr. Elliotson has recently translated the work into English. Cuvier had previously published his testimony, viz. that the facts were as undeniable as they were difficult to be explained on the present theory. The great names of Hufeland, Meckel, Reil, Autenrieth, Soemerring, Scarpa, etc., etc., appear as attestors of the facts, and their independence of the imagination of the patients. To these must be added the reports delivered in the courts of Berlin and Vienna by the several committees appointed severally by the Prussian and Austrian governments, and composed of the most eminent physicians, anatomists, and naturalists of the Prussian and Austrian States. In this country, the rising opinion of our first rate medical men is that the subject must sooner or later be submitted to a similar trial in this country, in order that so dangerous an implement (if it should prove to be a new physical agent akin to the galvanic electricity) may be taken out of the hands of the ignorant and designing, as hath already been done on the Continent by very severe Laws. Putting the truth or falsehood of the theory wholly out of the question, still it is altogether unique, and such as no history of the present age dare omit. Nay, it may be truly said that it becomes more interesting, more important, on the supposition

of its falsehood than of its truth, from the great number and wide dispersion of celebrated individuals, of the highest rank in science, who have joined in attesting its truth; especially as the largest part of these great men were for a long time its open opponents, and all, with the single exception of Cuvier, its avowed disbelievers. Add to this that as an article of entertainment, and as throwing a new light on the oracles and mysteries of Greek, Roman, and Egyptian Paganism, it would not be easy to point out its rival. These are the grounds on which I rest my continued recommendation of such an article as well worthy the attention of the conductors of your great work. One other motive will not be without its weight in *your* mind. I have some grounds for believing that a work of this kind is in *contemplation* by persons from whose hands it ought, if possible, to be rescued by anticipation, as it will, I know, be a main object with them to use the facts in order to undermine the *divine* character of the Gospel history, and the superhuman powers of its great founder; a scheme which can be rendered plausible only by misstatements, exaggeration, and the confounding of testimonies—those of fanatics and enthusiasts with the sober results of guarded experiment, given in by men of science and authority.’²¹

²¹ *Some Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lippincott's Magazine* 13.710 (June, 1874).

When they are put together, the marginal note and this letter suggest a fairly extensive list of volumes with which Coleridge might be presumed to have had some acquaintance. Doubtless he had access to other important works which he does not happen to cite. He must, of course, have dipped into Mesmer; a copy of *Mesmerismus*, Berlin, 1814, annotated by the poet, was among the books that came into the possession of Lord Coleridge.²² He could scarcely have missed the passage on the evil eye in Bacon's essay *Of Envy*, or the passage on fascination in *The Advancement of Learning*.²³ He may in all likelihood have read more than one of the Latin treatises on fascination of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as that by Christian Frommann.²⁴ There is, however, at least in the marginal note, an element of grandiloquence which will lead the knowing to suspect that in regard to this, as to other domains of research, Coleridge gives the impression that he has mastered more of the pertinent literature than has actually been the

²² Haney, *Bibliography of Coleridge*, p. 121, No. 206. See also p. 112, No. 108; p. 124, No. 229.

²³ Book 2. *Works of Bacon*, ed. Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, 6.256-7.

²⁴ *Tractatus de Fascinatione Novus et Singularis, in quo Fascinatio vulgaris profligatur, naturalis confirmatur, & magica examinatur*, etc., Norimbergæ, 1675. Among 'the Latinists of the sixteenth century' Coleridge would doubtless first of all include Paracelsus.

case. Under any circumstances, it would not at present be advisable to attempt a more detailed account of his investigations, especially if they left him in the position where he began.

For an understanding of his poetry, it seems advantageous to turn from his own later studies, however extended, to the general interest in mesmerism evinced by the contemporaries of Coleridge during the formative period of his boyhood and youth. This interest was lively on the Continent, because of the vogue of Mesmer and his immediate disciples (his paper on the discovery of magnetism having been published in 1779), and because of the stir aroused by the commissions appointed in France to inquire into the validity of his pretensions;²⁵ and it was lively in England shortly after, for example at London and Bristol, through the vogue of mesmerists like the celebrated Dr. John Bell and Dr. J. B. de Mainauduc.²⁶ This latter personage left an extraordinary reputation at Bristol, so that Coleridge should ultimately have heard about him there; though it seems probable that he must have known something of the great magnetizer while a schoolboy at Christ's Hospital in London.

The methods by which the different magnet-

²⁵ In 1784.

²⁶ See the *History of Animal Magnetism; its Origin, Progress, and Present State; as Delivered by the late Dr. De Mainauduc*, etc. By G. Winter. Bristol, 1801.

izers attracted a following, did not, in all likelihood, vary to any great extent in their essentials, and must often have resembled the procedure of Mesmer himself in detail. He 'carried a long iron wand, with which he touched the bodies of the patients; . . . often, laying aside the wand, he magnetized them with his eyes, fixing his gaze on theirs.'²⁷ In fact, he seems to have made use of the principle described by Binet and Féré as 'hypnotization by sensorial excitement,' that is, (1) 'by excitement of the sense of sight'—not (a) 'strong and sudden excitement, by luminous rays, by solar or electric light'—but (b) 'slight and prolonged excitement, by fixing the eyes on an object, brilliant or otherwise, which is placed near the eyes, and somewhat above their level.'²⁸ The eye of the magnetizer, would, if unusually brilliant, constitute a suitable object for the patient's gaze; hence, as Mackay notes, with the mesmerists and animal magnetizers in general, fixing with the eye was an established element in the practice: 'First, request [the patient] to resign himself; to think of nothing; not to perplex himself by examining the effects which may be produced. . . . After having collected yourself, take his thumbs between your fingers in such a way that the internal part of your thumbs may be in

²⁷ Binet and Féré, *Animal Magnetism*, p. 10.

²⁸ *Animal Magnetism*, p. 93. Compare Albert Moll, *Hypnotism* (1890), pp. 28 ff.; p. 72.

contact with the internal part of his, *and then fix your eyes upon him!*'²⁹

Some conception of the stir created by the magnetizers in London while Coleridge was at school there, and at Bristol, which he subsequently visited, may be gathered from the following extracts, the first being supplied by Mackay:

'So much curiosity was excited by the subject, that, about [1788] a man named Holloway gave a course of lectures on animal magnetism in London, at the rate of five guineas for each pupil, and realized a considerable fortune. Louthembourg the painter and his wife followed the same profitable trade; and such was the infatuation of the people to be witnesses of their strange manipulations, that at times upwards of three thousand persons crowded around their house at Hammersmith, unable to gain admission. The tickets sold at prices varying from one to three guineas.'³⁰

In 1786, as recorded by Sir Gilbert Elliot, many well-known people were experiencing the magnetic treatment, among them the wife of Richard Brinsley Sheridan:

'I am going with [Mrs. Crewe] today to Dr. Bell, one of the magnetizing quacks, and the first whom I shall have seen. Lady Palmerston,

²⁹ *Extraordinary Popular Delusions* 1. 293; Mackay quotes from the instructions of the magnetizer Deleuze (1813).

³⁰ *Extraordinary Popular Delusions* 1. 287-8.

Mrs. Crewe, Mrs. Sheridan, and Miss Crewe have been twice at Mainaduc's. They were all infidels the first day, except Mrs. Crewe, who seemed staggered a little by the number and variety of the people she saw affected by the *crisis*. The next time, Mrs. Sheridan and Mrs. Crewe were both magnetized, and both had what is called a crisis—that is, they both fell into a sort of trance, or waking sleep, in which they could hear what passed, but had no power of speaking or moving, and they described it as very like the effects of laudanum. . . .

'All the fine people have been magnetized, and are learning to magnetize others. The Prince of Wales had a crisis—that is to say, became sick and faint.'³¹

The next quotation, from Mackay, bears witness to the further renown of De Mainauduc at Bristol:

'In the year 1788 Dr. Mainauduc, who had been a pupil, first of Mesmer and afterwards of [Deslon], arrived in Bristol, and gave public lectures upon magnetism. His success was quite extraordinary. People of rank and fortune hastened from London to Bristol to be magnetized, or to place themselves under his tuition. Dr. George Winter, in his *History of Animal Magnetism*, gives the following list of them: "They amounted to one hundred and twenty-

³¹ *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, First Earl of Minto*, 1.111-113.

seven, among whom there were one duke, one duchess, one marchioness, two countesses, one earl, one baron, three baronesses, one bishop, five right honorable gentlemen and ladies, two baronets, seven members of parliament, one clergyman, two physicians, seven surgeons, besides ninety-two gentlemen and ladies of respectability." He afterwards established himself in London, where he performed with equal success.³²

Coleridge was at school in London from 1782 until 1791; it seems impossible that he should have escaped all knowledge of what was in the air, especially as it was about 1788 when 'his brother Luke came to walk the London Hospital, and Coleridge then thought of nothing but how he too might become a doctor. He read all the medical and surgical books he could procure.'³³

The extracts that have just been given will suffice to indicate the amount of attention which was popularly bestowed upon 'facts of mind' during the youth of Coleridge and Wordsworth, and will help to explain the number of allusions to hypnotic fascination, hypnotic trances and suggestion, and the emergence from psychological 'crises', to be found in the poems designed by Wordsworth, and, more especially, by Coleridge, for the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798. The *Lyrical*

³² *Extraordinary Popular Delusions* 1.287.

³³ Campbell, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, p. 12.

Ballads were not merely an experiment in adapting a selection from the language of humble and rustic life to the expression of the chief human emotions; to a large extent they represented studies in the psychology of the abnormal, in which Wordsworth treated such diverse types as *The Idiot Boy*, the *Forsaken Indian Woman*, and *Peter Bell*—cases in actual life, or such as might have occurred in actual life, though he was to invest them with the light of the poetical imagination. Coleridge, on the other hand, who was to deal with 'supernatural' events as if they were real, works within a much narrower range of subject-matter. To tell the truth, so far as his salient ideas are concerned he hardly goes beyond the province of animal magnetism; and the notion of 'fixing', and then of a sudden release, keeps getting the mastery over him after the fashion of a hobby bestriding its rider. Add to this conception of 'fixing' the readily associated idea of a good or an evil will in the magnetizer, which may naturally extend to blessing or cursing the person who is 'fixed', and we have the dominant notions in *The Three Graves*, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, and much of the contemporary *Osorio*. There is, of course, a certain amount of Miltonic, Spenserian, and mediæval demonology interwoven or adumbrated, and therefore a further variation according as one decides the question mooted by 'the Latinists'

of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that is, whether 'fascination' is ever accomplished without demoniac assistance. Let the reader who can at every point in the story say whether the lady Geraldine is a witch, or 'an angel beautiful and bright' and yet 'a fiend', or a mere unsubstantial phantasm in the mind of Christabel, decide how Coleridge might have wished to settle this question. Presumably, in his effort to render the 'supernatural' more 'real', he failed to distinguish accurately for himself just when he believed, and when he did not believe, in dubious or impossible phenomena; that is, he tried to steer a middle course between 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity'. Indeed, Coleridge's wavering on this point—his 'philosophical doubt,' even thus early, whether to present the strange occurrences of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* as frankly supernatural, or as in some measure capable of a rational explanation, on the ground that they existed only as mental hallucinations on the part of the main character, who saw them in a hypnotic trance, or as the vagaries of 'A Poet's Reverie', that is, the impalpable substance of trances seen within a trance, a dream of a dream—involves his poem in an unfortunate want of self-consistency.

When we examine particular instances, however, the characteristics of the ever recurring magnetic trance in Coleridge betray a remarkable resemblance. One person, or personified

object, 'fixes' another; the 'fixed' person or object thereupon remains so for a sharply defined period:

Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.³⁴

Then, without warning, the spell is 'snapt',
and the hitherto motionless subject of the spell
may be thrown into violent activity. Or,
if the fascinated person or object has been set
in motion by the fascinator, the motion is suddenly
retarded or wholly arrested when the
trance of itself comes to an end, or when some
other kind of magnet gains the ascendancy:

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound.³⁵

³⁴ A. M. 261-2. Compare Dante, *Inferno* 34.25-27. This may suggest other references in Dante, e. g., *Purgatorio* 32.7-9, 67-72.

³⁵ A. M. 372-390.

In Coleridge, for example in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, one may almost say that any being or thing can 'fix' any other, so long as he or it may be supposed to have or be a face or an eye. Thus the Mariner fixes the Wedding-Guest, and holds him so to the end of the story; the Sun, which is at one time a face and perhaps at another an eye, in a certain position, namely the equatorial zenith, fixes the ship, which is also personified; the Moon is a face—or is she a benevolent eye?—so influential that the 'great bright eye' of the Ocean is caught and swayed by her; in the Hermit's description the wolf seems to be 'pointing' the owl; and the Pilot's boy is fixed by the Mariner. Furthermore, in this same ballad there is an immense amount of apparently casual looking and watching and eyeing, or of refusing and being unable to look, of good and evil looks, of glances direct and askance, of brilliant and alluring light and color, of glistening and glimmering, attractive and repulsive objects, all of which becomes suggestive when connected with the more evident cases of fascination. All or nearly all the looking is enforced, or is done in order to avoid the peril of fixation:

My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.³⁶

³⁶A. M. 502-3.

Probably no other noun is so frequently employed in the ballad as the word *eye* (or *eyes*); and the repetition of words like *bright*, *bright-eyed*, *glitter*, *glittering*, *fixed*, *still*, *trance*, having been mentioned in a footnote, requires no further discussion.

In order to make the preceding remarks on Coleridge more intelligible, we need only scrutinize the following extracts from his poetry. Here and there a line or two of explanation, or a footnote, will be added, when either may seem to be desirable; for order and transition in this material I may trust to a somewhat mechanical grouping—even though the groups patently overlap, and sometimes include mere verbal resemblances between passages where the hypnotic influence is not alluded to and those in which it is.

1. The bright flashing or glittering eye:

- (a) It is an ancient Mariner,
And he *stoppeth* one of three.
‘By thy long grey beard and *glittering eye*,
Now wherefore *stopp’st* thou me?’ A. M. 1-4.

- (b) *Bright-eyed* Mariner. A. M. 20, 40.

- (c) ‘I fear thee and thy *glittering eye*,³⁷
And thy skinny hand so brown.’ A. M. 228-9.

³⁷ ‘And constrained by that *glittering eye*, Hypatia knelt before her’ [Miriam]. Kingsley, *Hypatia*.

- (d) The Mariner, whose *eye* is *bright*,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone. *A. M.* 618-620.

- (e) Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her *fair large eyes* 'gan *glitter bright*.
Christabel 220-1.

- (f) And both blue *eyes* more *bright* than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With *open eyes* (ah woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully.
Christabel 290-3.

- (g) I see thy heart!
There is a frightful *glitter* in thine *eye*,
Which doth betray thee. *Osorio* 5.149-151.

- (h) *Maria*. O mark his *eye*! he hears not what you
say.
Osorio (*pointing at vacancy*). Yes, mark his
eye! There's fascination in it.
Osorio 5.255-6.

- (i) And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His *flashing eyes*, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And *close your eyes* with holy dread.
Kubla Khan 49-52.

2. The dull eye:

- (a) There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and *glazed* each *eye*.

A weary time! a weary time!
How *glazed* each *weary eye*. A. M. 143-6.

- (b) A snake's small *eye blinks dull* and *shy*.
Christabel 583.

3. The wild look :

- (a) 'God save thee, Ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus—
Why *look'st* thou so?'—With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross. A. M. 79-82.

- (b) A gust of wind sterte up behind
And whistled thro' his bones;
Thro' the holes of his *eyes* and the hole of his
mouth
Half-whistles and half-groans.
A. M., 1 ed., 195-8.

- (c) I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit *raised his eyes*,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! Ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.' A. M. 560-9.

- (d) Behold! her bosom and half her side—
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks *nor stirs*;
Ah! what a *stricken look* was hers!
Christabel, 252-6.

- (e) Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
 Why stares she with *unsettled eye*?
 Can she the bodiless dead espy?
Christabel 207-9.

- (f) His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
 His cheeks they quivered, his *eyes were wild*.
Christabel 640-1.

- (g) Then when he *fix'd* his obstinate eye on you,
 And you pretended to *look strange* and tremble.
 Why—why—what ails you now?
Osorio (*with a stupid stare*). Me? why? what
 ails me?
 A pricking of the blood—it might have happen'd
 At any other time. *Osorio* 3.175-9.

- (h) She started up—the servant maid
 Did see her when she rose;
 And she has oft declared to me
 The blood within her froze.
Three Graves 172-5.

4. The evil look:

- (a) Ah! well-a-day! what *evil looks*
 Had I from old and young! *A. M.* 139-140.
- (b) Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
 And slowly *rolled her eyes around*.
Christabel 245-6.
- (c) And in her arms the maid she took,
 Ah wel-a-day!
 And with low voice and *doleful look*
 These words did say:
 'In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
 Which is lord of thy utterance, *Christabel*.'
Christabel 263-8.

- (d) Geraldine in maiden wise
Casting down her *large bright eyes*,

And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast,
And *looked askance* at Christabel—
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

Christabel 573-4, 579-582.

- (e) And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade,—

There came and *looked him in the face*
An angel beautiful and *bright*;
And that he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight!

Love 47-52.

5. The eye and the curse; *e. g.*, the mother's, brother's, widow's, or orphan's curse, and the dead man's curse:

- (a) Beneath the foulest mother's curse
No child could ever thrive:
A mother is a mother still,
The holiest thing alive.

Three Graves 255-9.

- (b) To him no word the mother said,
But on her knee she fell,
And fetched her breath while thrice your hand
Might toll the passing-bell.

'Thou daughter now above my head,
Whom in my womb I bore,
May every drop of thy heart's blood
Be curst for ever more.'

Three Graves 134-141.

- (c) What if his spirit
 Re-enter'd its cold corse, and came upon thee,

 What if, his *steadfast eye* still beaming pity
 And brother's love, he turn'd his head aside,
 Lest he should *look* at thee, and with one *look*
 Hurl thee beyond all power of penitence? ³⁸
Osorio 3. 80-1, 83-6.

- (d) *Alhadra*. . . . I shall curse thee then!
 Wert thou in heaven, my curse would pluck thee
 thence. *Osorio* 5. 287-8.

- (e) Not all the blessings of an host of angels
 Can blow away a desolate widow's curse;
 And tho' thou spill thy heart's blood for atone-
 ment,
 It will not weigh against an orphan's tear.
Osorio 5. 203-6.

- (f) 'The curse liveth for him in the *eye* of the dead
 men.'

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
 Nor rot nor reek did they:
 The *look* with which they *looked* on me
 Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
 A spirit from on high;
 But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!
 Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
 And yet I could not die. *A. M.* 257-262

³⁸ See also *Osorio* 1. 10-13, 20-21, 40-41, 80-81 (cf. *P. W.*, p. 458, No. 52), 144, 185; 2. 22-3, 84, 99-100, 106-7, etc.

- (g) All stood together on the deck,
 For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
 All *fixed* on me their *stony eyes*,
 That in the moon did *glitter*.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
 Had never passed away:
 I could not draw my *eyes* from theirs,
 Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
 I viewed the ocean green,
 And *looked* far forth, yet little *saw*
 Of what had else been seen.

A. M. 434-445.

—This is because what is behind him has the same effect as the eye of a fiend upon the sinner whom he is pursuing.

6. Enforced looking, refusal to look, and the effort to look away:

- (a) He holds him with his skinny hand, .
 'There was a ship,' quoth he.
 'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!'
 Eftsoons his hand dropt he.³⁹

A. M. 9-12.

³⁹ *Eftsoons his hand dropt he*: Though this may mean that the Wedding-Guest at first takes hold of the Mariner's hand in order to free himself, and then desists as the spell begins to work, it may otherwise mean that the Mariner drops his hand, since he now can hold the Wedding-Guest by the power of the glittering eye.

- (b) Listen, O listen, thou Wedding-guest!
 'Marinere! thou hast thy will:
 'For that, which comes out of thine eye, doth
 make
 'My body and soul to be still.'⁴⁰

A. M., 1 ed., 362-5.

(c) Lines 45-50 of *A. M.* represent a pursuit where we are to imagine the pursuer with his eyes fastened upon the back of the head of him who is being pursued. The pursued does not look around.

(d) And in *A. M.*, lines 149-152, the Mariner's eye is fixed upon a distant object, which, as it approaches, assumes the form of a ship.

- (e) All stood together on the deck,
 For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
 All fix'd on me their stony eyes
 That in the moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
 Had never pass'd away:
 I could not draw my een from theirs
 Ne turn them up to pray.

⁴⁰ The Wedding-Guest clearly refers to a magnetic emanation from the body of the Mariner. Mackay says: "The assertions made in the celebrated treatise of Deleuze are thus summed up: "There is a fluid continually escaping from the human body," and "forming an atmosphere around us," which, as "it has no determined current," produces no sensible effects on surrounding individuals. It is, however, "capable of being directed by the will;" and, when so directed, "is sent forth in currents," with a force corresponding to the energy we possess. Its motion is "similar to that of the rays from burning bodies." . . . The will of the magnetizer . . . can fill a tree with this fluid. . . . Some persons, when sufficiently charged with this fluid, fall into a state of somnambulism, or magnetic ecstasy; and when in this state, "they see the fluid encircling the magnetizer like a halo of light." *Extraordinary Popular Delusions* 1.291.

And in its time the spell was snapt,
And I could move my een. *A. M.*, 1 ed., 439-448.

- (f) I *looked* upon the rotting sea,
And drew my *eyes* away;
I *looked* upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I *looked* to heaven, and tried to pray.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the *balls* like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary *eye*,
And the dead were at my feet.

A. M. 240-244, 248-252.

- (g) Beneath the *lightning* and the *Moon*
The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved *their eyes*.

A. M. 329-332.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee;
The body and I pulled at one rope
But he said nought to me.

A. M. 341-344.

- (h) The Mariners all 'gan pull the ropes,
But look at me they n'old:
Thought I, 'I am as thin as air—

They cannot me behold.' *A. M.*, 1 ed., 374-7.

- (i) I turn'd my head in fear and dread,
And by the holy rood,
The bodies had advanc'd, and now
Before the mast they stood.

They lifted up their stiff right arms,
They held them straight and tight;
And each right-arm burnt like a torch,
A torch that's borne upright.

*Their stony eye-balls glitter'd on
In the red and smoky light.*

I pray'd and turn'd my head away
Forth looking as before. *A. M.*, 1 ed., 489-500.

(j) But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear. *A. M.* 500-503.

(k) The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred. *A. M.* 542-3.

✓ (l) I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach. *A. M.* 586-590.

7. The bright and flashing object:

(a) I cannot chuse but *fix* my sight
On that small vapor, thin and white!
Variant lines in *Lewti*, *P. W.*, p. 568.

(b) The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame,

And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall.⁴¹
Christabel 156-162.

⁴¹ That is, besides the eye-like boss of the shield, Christabel sees what we often observe in the lower animals, cats, for example, but more rarely in human beings, when a beam of light is properly reflected from the retina of the animal or person into the eye of the observer. Compare the use made by Poe of this phenomenon in *The Tell-tale Heart*.

- (c) The smooth thin lids
 Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—
 Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
 And oft the while she seems to smile
 As infants at a sudden light!
 Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep.
Christabel 314-319.

- (d) A little distance from the prow
 Those crimson shadows were:
 I turned my *eyes* upon the deck—
 Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
 And, by the holy rood!
 A man all light, a seraph-man,
 On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
 It was a heavenly sight!
 They stood as signals to the land,
 Each one a lovely light.⁴² *A. M.* 488-495.

(e) With the images in Coleridge's description of the flaming seraph-band compare the fascination produced by the 'fire-flags' (*aurora borealis*) in *A. M.* 313-7; the parti-colored water in *A. M.* 269-271; and the glistening 'water-snakes' in *A. M.* 272-281.

8. The Sun personified, and represented as having a face or an eye with the power of fascination:

⁴² Compare Milton, *Paradise Lost* 6. 579-881:

At each behind
 A Seraph stood, and in his hand a Reed
 Stood waving tipt with fire.

- (a) The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone *bright*, and on the right
Went down into the sea. *A. M.* 25-28.

- (b) The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea. *A. M.* 83-86.

- (c) Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious sun uprist. *A. M.* 97-98.

- (d) The women sat down by his side,
And talked as 'twere by stealth.

'The Sun peeps through the close thick leaves,
See, dearest Ellen! see!
'Tis in the leaves, a little sun,
No bigger than your ee;

'A tiny sun, and it has got
A perfect glory too;
Ten thousand threads and hairs of light,
Make up a glory gay and bright
Round that small orb, so blue.'
Three Graves 503-513.

- (e) The western wave was all a-flame.
The day was well nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad *bright* Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
 (Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
 As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
 With broad and burning face. A. M. 171-180.

(f) The thought is repeated in lines 185-6, the gloss to which reads: 'And its [the spectre-ship's] ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting sun.'

(g) 'The ship hath suddenly been becalmed.'

And we did speak only to break
 The silence of the sea !
 All in a hot and copper sky,
 The bloody Sun, at noon,
 Right up above the mast did stand,
 No bigger than the Moon.⁴³

Day after day, day after day,
 We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
 As idle as a painted ship
 Upon a painted ocean. A. M. 109-119.

(h) The sails at noon left off their tune,
 And the ship stood still also.

The *Sun*, right up above the mast,
 Had *fixed* her to the ocean:⁴⁴
 But in a minute she 'gan stir,
 With a short uneasy motion—
 Backwards and forwards half her length
 With a short uneasy motion.

⁴³ And at mid-day from the mast
 No shadow on the deck is cast.

Bowles, *Camdens* 40-41.

⁴⁴ For the sun as an eye, compare:

No longer . . . may I behold yon day-star's
 sacred eye. Sophocles, *Antigone* 880-1.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
 She made a sudden bound. A. M. 381-390.

9. The fascination of the Moon, which is personified, and represented as a face or eye:

(a) Mother of wildly-working visions! hail!
 I watch thy gliding, while with watery light
 Thy weak eye glimmers through a fleecy veil.
 Sonnet to the Autumnal Moon 2-5.

(b) 'At the rising of the Moon,'
 We listened and looked sideways up! A. M. 202.

—namely, at the star-dogged Moon. Whereupon,
 One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
 Too quick for groan or sigh,
 Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
 And cursed me with his eye. A. M. 211-214.

(c) 'In his loneliness and *fixedness*, he yearneth towards the journeying Moon.'

The moving Moon went up the sky,
 And no where did abide. A. M. 263-4

I. e., after a seven day's gazing at the eyes of the dead men, he fixes his eye on the Moon, which is, like the Sun, a face or an eye. Then he turns his face to the ocean, and watches the water-snakes as they glisten. He blesses them, the spell is 'snap', and he is able to pray.

(d) 'Still as a slave before his lord,
 The ocean hath no blast;
 His *great bright eye* most *silently*
 Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go;
 For she guides him smooth or grim.
 See, brother see! how graciously
 She *looketh down* on him'.⁴⁵ A. M. 414-421.

- (e) *Osorio (with great majesty)*. O woman!
 I have stood silent like a slave before thee.
Osorio 5. 302-3.

- (f) The moonlight steeped in silentness
 The steady weath'erclock. A. M. 478-479

- (g) Silent icicles,
 Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.
Frost at Midnight 73-74.

- (h) On moonlight bushes,
 Whose dewy leaflets are but half-disclosed,
 You may perchance behold them on the twigs,
 Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright
 and full,
 Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade
 Lights up her love-torch. *The Nightingale* 64-9.

⁴⁵ For lo the Sea that fleets about the Land,
 And like a girdle clips her solide waist,
 Musike and measure both doth understand;
 For his great chrystall eye is alwayes cast
 Up to the Moone, and on her fixèd fast;
 And as she daunceth in her pallid spheere,
 So daunceth he about his Center heere.

Sir John Davies, *Orchestra*, stanza 49.

The parallel to Coleridge was noted by Mrs. Humphry Ward, in *Ward's English Poets*, 1880, 1.550.

See also:

In the broad open eye of the solitary sky.

Wordsworth, *Stray Pleasures* 16.

- (i) And he beheld the moon, and, hushed at once,
Suspend his sobs, and laughs most silently,
While his fair eyes, that swam with undropped
tears,
Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam! Well!—
It is a father's tale.⁴⁶ *The Nightingale* 102-106.

10. Fascination of animals:

- (a) 'When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.' *A. M.* 535-7.

- (b) And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the *eye* of Christabel.⁴⁷
Christabel 149-151.

- (c) When lo! I saw a bright green snake
.
Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
.
This dream it would not pass away—
It seems to live upon my eye!
Christabel 549, 552, 558-9.

- (d) A snake's small *eye* blinks *dull* and shy,
And the lady's *eyes* they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's *eye*,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she *look'd askance!*—
One moment—and the sight was fled!

⁴⁶ Cf. *P. W.*, p. 456, No. 37.

⁴⁷ A searching study of Coleridge's use of the supernatural in *Christabel* is to be found in Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge's edition of the poem (London, 1907). See also the comprehensive treatise, in two volumes, on the evil eye, by Dr. S. Seligman: *Der Böse Blick*, Berlin, 1910.

as has also the description of the Ass turning his head to grin at Peter, while Peter eyes the Ass and grins back. Two representative passages from the ballad may be quoted:

He looks, he cannot choose but look;
Like some one reading in a book—
A book that is enchanted.

Ah, well-a-day for Peter Bell!
He will be turned to iron soon,
Meet Statue for the court of Fear.⁴⁹

And now the Spirits of the Mind
Are busy with poor Peter Bell;
Upon the rights of *visual sense*
Usurping, with a prevalence
More terrible than *magic spell*.

.....
The sweat pours down from Peter's face,
So grievous is his heart's contrition;
With agony his *eye-balls* ache
While he beholds by the furze-brake
This miserable vision!⁵⁰

That the normal emotions of the human spirit may endure sufferings more terrible than those produced by 'magic spell' is Wordsworth's tacit criticism upon some of the devices employed by Coleridge. A more prolonged comparison than can here be made between *The Rime of the*

⁴⁹ P. B. 518-523.

⁵⁰ P. B. 916-920, 931-5.

Ancient Mariner and *Peter Bell* would bring out further interesting differences in the treatment of detail by the two poets. It is enough to say that in the happy fitting of details into a general plan, and the transition from one incident to the next, the superiority lies altogether on the side of Wordsworth. For one thing, since he is more fertile he is not compelled to make the same notion do duty, under various disguises, for the machinery throughout an entire ballad. If he does repeat himself, the repetition is not of a questionable and, after all, unimportant phenomenon, such as that of ocular hypnosis. As for Coleridge, one can scarcely maintain that the passages here collected tend to ennoble one another in such a fashion as to increase our respect for this author. It is disappointing to find his 'poet's eye' continually 'fixed' by so trivial a 'fact of mind'.

